

A PUBLICATION OF



The *Grassroots Fundraising Journal* is a bimonthly publication of GIFT.

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Periodicals postage at Oakland, CA 94615
023-243 and at additional mailing offices
Postmaster: Please send address changes to
1904 Franklin Street, Suite 705
Oakland, CA 94612
©2009 GIFT | ISSN No. 0740-4832



Parting thoughts...

By Stephanie Roth

I WRITE MY FINAL EDITOR'S COLUMN with both sadness and excitement. I'm sad to say goodbye to this wonderful publication that has taught me so much and that has been an important focus of my work for 20 years, and I'm excited about the next generation of fundraisers, teachers, and writers who will succeed me. I have no doubt that the talented and committed members of GIFT's board and staff and the *Journal's* Editorial Board will take the *Journal* into a new era while continuing its tradition of reflecting social justice values in practical, hands-on fundraising information. It is this legacy that has made the *Journal* the favorite fundraising resource of thousands of readers during its 28-year history.

This is a strange and uncertain time for the publishing industry. If long-time publications like the *Christian Science Monitor* and *Gourmet* magazine can't survive in print, what does that mean for the *Journal*? We're working hard to keep up with the changing trends by offering subscribers an electronic version of the *Journal* starting in 2010, but we will also stay in print—thanks to your continued support through subscriptions and additional donations. I hope the *Journal* will be able to continue serving those (like us aging boomers) who still prefer to hold a magazine in our hands rather than read it on a screen.

For my final issue, we've added extra content and included tribute ads and testimonials to GIFT and me. I was extremely touched to read all of the kind words from so many of you. This issue features articles on topics that are near to my heart, as well as my own reflections on 20 years with the *Journal*. You'll get some extremely useful information about how to better integrate fundraising and organizing, learn how a small town in Iowa ran a successful capital campaign by engaging everyone in the community, and understand why you should care about the diversion of public dollars in the form of tax benefits to private foundations.

I want to acknowledge the wonderful team at GIFT and the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal* that I've had the privilege of working with over many years. Associate Publisher Jennifer Emiko Boyden constantly learns new skills that enable us to keep up with the technologies that help us serve you better. She has brought creativity and good marketing sense to all she does. Right now, she is working to make our online archive available to subscribers, as well as continuing to produce top-notch webinars with experienced and popular trainers. Nan Jessup has held multiple jobs over her 10-plus years with the *Journal*, handling production, database and circulation management, and now managing all things financial. Priscilla Hung and Manish Vaidya are not only talented fundraisers, but through their engagement in a wide range of social justice networks, bring new ideas and resources that make their way into the *Journal*. And our newest staff person, Mónica Enríquez, keeps us all sane with her administrative skills, good humor, and the artistic gifts that have brought us into the online video revolution.

I also want to thank the many wonderful authors who have contributed to the *Journal*, and you, the readers, who ensure that what we write about is useful, inspiring, and leads to successful fundraising!

Starting in 2010, GIFT is excited to offer Journal subscribers the option to receive the Journal electronically! Your Journal subscription (print or electronic) will also include unlimited access to our archives. We'll be in touch soon about your delivery preference.



Members from Neighbor to Neighbor chapters rallied in Boston for an increase in the state minimum wage. Delivering the message that “a buck is not enough,” volunteers showed legislators what an extra 50 cents an hour would mean over the course of a year.

Silos Are for Farms

How to Make Fundraising a Part of Your Organizing

By Tina Cincotti

WHEN I STARTED FUNDRAISING about 12 years ago, I was working as an organizer. A few years later, when I read the *Journal's* classic article by the late Vicki Quatmann, “Organizing & Fundraising: Sisters in the Struggle,” (Vol. 13, No. 6, Dec. 1994), something clicked. Organizing and fundraising felt connected. Vicki helped me figure out why.

Since then, I've strived to bring a “culture of fundraising” to all the organizations I work with—a culture where fundraising and philanthropy are just as much a part of the organization's core mission as their program work is. The two cannot be separated.

Barack Obama's campaign for president brought together organizing and fundraising more powerfully than has ever been done on such a huge scale. The country experienced a level of volunteerism and a level of giving that we'd never seen before. And we are still seeing increasing numbers of people volunteering.

These responses demonstrate the proven connection between giving time and giving money. A study by researcher Penelope Burk showed that 93 percent of donors volunteer and 95 percent give to the organizations where they volunteer. So there is a natural connection between organizing people to give time and organizing people to give money. Notice that I used

the word “organizing.” Fundraising is organizing. If you can do one, you can do the other. In fact, if you can do one, you must do the other.

This idea of building an organizational culture of fundraising makes sense to a lot of people in theory. Yet, often times they don't know how to make it happen in practice at their organizations. A big part of my work focuses on helping groups integrate their fundraising and their organizing.

This article builds on the ideas Vicki raised and offers practical suggestions for breaking down divisions between program work and fundraising. Here are some tips and strategies to get you started.

1. Discuss the Similarities of Organizing and Fundraising

At their core, organizing and fundraising are both about building relationships and building community. Unfortunately, we often hear the word *fundraising* and immediately jump to the part where you ask someone for money, even though that's only 5 percent of the job. Undoing this misconception is critical. Start by taking a step back and expanding your view of what fundraising is really all about: building a broad network of like-minded people who will give you time, money, advice, power

THIS DONOR TOTALLY DEFIED THE ORGANIZER'S VISION OF WHO A \$1,000 DONOR IS. THAT EXPERIENCE BROKE DOWN THE CONCEPT OF "US VERSUS THEM," OF DONORS BEING SOMEHOW DIFFERENT FROM PEOPLE SHE KNOWS.

in numbers, moral support in good times and bad, and lots more. Organizers and leaders from your membership base will see striking similarities between identifying and involving new volunteers and identifying and involving potential donors. Both start by recognizing those who are predisposed to your cause and learning more about their interests, then getting them involved when the time is right by starting small, and continuing to build the relationship to steady, more dedicated involvement. Seeing these parallels helps organizers and membership leaders realize that they already possess most of the skills needed to be a great fundraiser—because they are the same skills that it takes to be a great organizer. This insight won't single-handedly compel anyone to start fundraising, but it's an important first step in understanding what fundraising is really all about.

2. Create Space to Talk about What Is Hard about Fundraising

Fundraising is scary for virtually everyone at first. There is no getting around that. It's also incredibly rewarding and empowering, but that doesn't come until later for most of us. U.S. culture is riddled with taboos about money—it's something that polite people just aren't supposed to talk about. So, what does that say about those of us who are not only talking about money but also asking you for some of yours?

Here's what it says to me: It says we will not play by these rules. It says we will not allow a system that has created such a vastly unequal distribution of wealth to go unchallenged. It says that we are proud of the life-changing work that we are doing, that we need money to do the work, and that we aren't afraid to ask for it. Fundraising doesn't support political work; fundraising *is* political work. Fundraising doesn't support organizing; fundraising *is* organizing. Fundraising doesn't support movement building; fundraising *is* movement building.

Now, as I get down off my soapbox, let me say how important it is that you talk with anyone who is new to fundraising about the societal taboos around talking about money. These are very real. Discuss where they come from. Talk about people's first associations and earliest memories of money and share yours. Create space to talk about how they feel about asking someone for money. Depending on the culture of your organization, you'll have to think about how personal you want to get with this conversation. We certainly don't want anyone to feel put on the spot or as though they are being forced into

some kind of group therapy session. Be aware of this danger and respect people's limits as well as your own boundaries.

The other piece that's important to recognize is that what's challenging about fundraising can be different for different people. If you grew up in poverty or struggling to make ends meet, your perspective and feelings about asking someone for a donation may be different from those of your co-worker who was raised upper-middle class. This is not to say that organizers or people from families who didn't have to worry about money are comfortable fundraising, nor is the opposite necessarily true—that folks who grew up poor are always reluctant to ask for money. It's simply to say that everyone's comforts and discomforts will vary.

Race and class dynamics are as present within fundraising as with anything else, probably even more so because we are dealing directly with money. Be conscious of this factor and incorporate into your conversations about fundraising the ways racism, classism, and privilege are at play.

3. Start with Small, Less Scary Fundraising Work, and Demystify Who Donors Are

It can be reassuring to organizers and members to see all the different ways they can help raise money without actually having to make "the ask." This isn't to say that they won't grow into that part of fundraising. But it's helpful to get one's feet wet doing other things first—calling donors to thank them for their gift, accompanying a seasoned fundraiser on a cultivation or stewardship visit, giving tours to donors, leading an open house, or writing handwritten thank you cards to people who recently attended a luncheon.

By beginning to have direct contact with donors, everyone will start to see them as the real people they are. For example, I remember working with an organizer-in-training to write personal notes on thank you letters. She came across the letter for a close organizational ally and was blown away by the size of the woman's contribution. This donor totally defied the organizer's vision of who a \$1,000 donor is. That experience broke down the concept of "us versus them" for that organizer, of donors being somehow different from people she knows. This was a critical step for her. She not only realized that she could be successful in asking for a donation of that size or more, she also discovered that she herself knew people and could relate to people capable of giving significant gifts.

4. Make Fundraising Part of Leadership Development

Leadership development is a core program for many grassroots organizations. When members get involved and volunteer, they might learn about the political process, how to write a press release, public speaking skills, and so on. Fundraising rarely makes this list. That has to change. Your members don't need to be shielded or protected from the complications of budgets and balance sheets. Understanding the organization's finances helps a person appreciate the need for fundraising. By not including fundraising and organizational finances as part of our leadership development curriculum, we are colluding with the same system that makes money a societal taboo that's not to be discussed.

Educate your members about the role of fundraising in building a movement for justice. Show volunteers your budget and help them understand how to read it. Tell them where you get the money to pay for all the work your organization does and all the time that goes into raising that money. Talk to them about how they can help, and not just by selling raffle tickets and organizing a yard sale. See if your volunteers would be willing to come with you to meet with a supporter to talk about the impact the organization has had in their lives. Ask them to write a "thank you" note to a donor or call a new contributor who just gave their first gift. For a supporter, there's nothing more powerful than hearing directly from people on the ground about how their donation made a difference.

5. Offer Different Ways to be Involved in Fundraising

Everyone has different talents. Match people up with the fundraising strategies that play to their strengths. If someone is a great writer, they may be able to help write direct mail appeals, newsletter articles, grant proposals, or donor acknowledgments. A born party planner could take the lead on house parties or grassroots events for the organization.

Always, always think about ways to connect organizers and members to individual donor work, including with donors who give significant high-dollar gifts. Don't assume your organizers only know low-dollar donors. They know prospects for "major" gifts as well. Remember—giving is not a state of wealth; it's a state of mind. As I touched on above, the more you equate "major donor" with "rich person," the less successful your fundraising will be.

Finally, don't assume that so-called major donors won't want to meet with organizers or membership leaders. These high-dollar supporters are exactly the ones who want to hear firsthand stories about the work, and who better to tell them than an organizer and a lead volunteer.



Neighbor to Neighbor volunteers from the city of Lynn, MA, take part in a phone bank.

6. Provide Structure and Build in Systems of Accountability

Fundraising should be part of every staff person's workplan alongside their organizing responsibilities. At Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts (N2N-MA), where I was the development director for seven years, each organizer is assigned a list of donors, fundraising goals, and a timeline. There is also an agreed-upon amount of time that each person will spend fundraising each week. The time may vary from person to person and from week to week but it is planned into the organizers' schedules. Otherwise, it won't happen. It can't be an add-on for when there's extra time. Because, as any organizer knows, there's never extra time.

Regular reporting about fundraising should be integrated into staff meetings and supervisory check-ins. At N2N-MA, I put fundraising as the first item on the agenda as often as possible. Having it at the top made sure the group was alert and that we didn't run out of time and have to cut the discussion short. When you meet, have people report on their fundraising priorities, accomplishments, and struggles, just as they do with their organizing. This sharing also provides a level of group accountability so each person can hear what their peers are working on.

Absolute transparency around income and expenses is even more critical for organizations where all staff have fundraising responsibilities. Report on budget projections and provide financial reports regularly so that it's clearly known how much money needs to be raised, how much has been pledged, and how much remains to bring in. Also, discuss potential shortfalls as a group and troubleshoot new fundraising strategies to close

the gap. Everyone in the organization deserves to know and understand the state of the group's finances. It also helps staff to understand how their piece fits into the big picture.

7. Give Trainings, Templates, Tools and Talking Points

Spend time regularly on skill-building exercises related to fundraising. At N2N-MA, I tried to give the organizers a new fundraising script every month or two, and I'd pair them up at staff meeting to practice. I'd have people sit back-to-back so it would feel as close to a real phone call as possible, without the benefits of eye contact and body language. I'd also sometimes pair veteran organizers who had been fundraising for a while with newer recruits for peer mentoring and support. It was incredibly powerful for organizers with little fundraising experience to see what skilled fundraisers they could become. I'd plan enough time so that each person got to play the donor and the fundraiser at least once. Then I'd bring the group back together to share what worked well and where they got stuck.

With any new script, I found the organizers were more comfortable getting on the phones if they'd already had a chance to run through it a few times.

In addition to training, it's important for development staff to consistently provide template letters, sample voicemail messages, and talking points on recent accomplishments and upcoming campaigns. Some people use them. Some don't. Some just feel better knowing they have them if they need them. Either way, giving organizers all the tools they need to succeed maximizes the effectiveness of their fundraising time and enables them to hit the ground running. You don't want each person reinventing the wheel every time a follow-up letter needs to be sent out.

Providing these materials also sends the message that you respect and value their time—something that all organizers never have enough of!

8. Not Everyone Will Grow to Love Fundraising

Although every organizer can be an effective fundraiser, that doesn't mean it's going to be everyone's favorite thing to do. Some will like it. Some will love it. Some won't. That's okay. They don't have to love, or even like, every aspect of their job. But fundraising is a core skill. All organizers and members need to know how to do it.

This model is also the most sustainable way to build a long-term, integrated movement for social change—so it's responsible organizing too. Because fundraising isn't the primary job responsibility of any organizer, it's important to understand that they will have more time to give to fundraising at some times

than others, depending on the ebb and flow of your group's program work. Be sympathetic to this flow.

At the same time, it is also important to remind organizers that often the best time to raise money is at the height of a campaign. This is a delicate balance. It is also one of the reasons why it is so important to have a structure in place where fundraising is part of everyone's weekly workplan and is discussed regularly at supervisory check-ins and at staff meetings. Otherwise, it's the first thing to go at crunch time!

9. Lead By Example—It's a Two-Way Street

It should go without saying that fundraising staff must be included in strategic planning sessions, staff retreats, and other organizational meetings. As a development director, I also found it important to spend some of my time organizing. Not at the level that organizers spend time fundraising, but a few times each year spending some time in the field door-knocking or phone-banking kept me connected to the work.

This kind of involvement isn't anything fancy that requires training as a professional organizer, but it's enough to give you a real sense of the work on the ground. And since I usually "volunteered" at peak campaign season when extra hands were desperately needed, the organizers and the membership really appreciated it as well. This involvement was good for our relationships and contributed to all of us feeling like part of the same team.

10. Consider the Benefits

These practices won't all work exactly as outlined for every organization. And transitioning to this model can be a long process. But you have to start somewhere and the benefits are enormous. Here is just a glimpse of what you can expect if you take steps toward breaking down the divisions between your organizing and your fundraising:

- More collaboration within your organization
- More resources dedicated to fundraising
- Stronger relationships with your donors
- More volunteers as donors
- More donors as volunteers
- More money for program work
- A stronger movement for change

Now, who wouldn't want all that? ■

Tina Cincotti is a consultant, trainer, and coach who works with grassroots nonprofits and social change groups to improve their individual donor fundraising, donor communications, and donor relations. She can be reached at fundingchangeconsulting.com.

Democratizing Philanthropy



Challenging Foundations and Social Justice Organizations

By Christine Ahn

ALTHOUGH THE GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING JOURNAL does not focus on foundation fundraising, so many organizations are involved in seeking foundation support that it's useful from time to time to consider the role of foundations in the nonprofit sector.

Many activists have been challenging social justice organizations to question their reliance on foundation funding, and instead, to develop a stronger base of support from the communities they serve. While this article is not meant to be an argument against raising money from a broad base of individual donors, I believe it is important for social justice organizations to understand how foundations function and what can be done to create a more democratic philanthropic sector.

Money Out of the Tax Stream

In 2006, Warren Buffet donated more than \$30 billion to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Three trustees—Bill Gates, Melinda Gates, and Mr. Buffett—and three other key players—Bill Gates Sr., former Gates Foundation CEO Patty Stonesifer, and current CEO Jeff Raikes—decide how to allocate the \$3 billion the foundation is required to pay out each year. (Buffett mandated the funding to be spent down rather than keep accumulating. He said, “I wanted to make sure that to the extent I was providing extra money to them, it didn’t just go to build up the foundation size further, but that it was put to use.”)

Although it is impressive that Mr. Buffet, or Bill Gates for that matter, chose to donate his excess wealth to the Gates Foundation, the reality is that foundations’ funding comes at least partly from dollars that, were it not for charitable deductions allowed by tax laws, would have become public funds

to be allocated through the governmental process under the controlling power of the electorate. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation, in 2006 alone these charitable deductions cost the Treasury Department \$40 billion in lost tax revenue.

The considerable tax benefits that Mr. Buffett received for his generous donation translated to more than \$10 billion that we, the American public, have agreed to entrust to three individuals and their advisors to determine, based on their worldviews, which causes and organizations are worthy to receive a portion of this largesse.

In fact, it is estimated that at least 45 percent of the \$500 billion that foundations hold in their coffers belongs to the American public. As Akash Deep at Harvard University and Peter Frumkin at the University of Texas note in their working paper *The Foundation Payout Puzzle*, “When a foundation is created today, the burden of lost tax revenue is borne by citizens today,” with the promise that it will be paid out in the future.

This situation is well illustrated by investigative journalist Mark Dowie, who wrote in his seminal 2001 book, *American Foundations: An Investigative History*, about a meeting of the trusted inner circle of the Open Society Institute (OSI), a private foundation started by international businessman George Soros. During a protracted argument that kept the group’s discussion going in circles, a frustrated Soros finally said, “This is my money. We will do it my way.” This interjection silenced the room until a courageous junior member raised his voice to tell Mr. Soros, “No, it isn’t.” The young dissident went on, “Half of it is ours. If you hadn’t placed that money in OSI or another of your 25 foundations, sir, about half of it would be in the [US] Treasury.”

As foundation dollars are removed from the tax base, every level of government has less revenue with which to operate, which translates to billions of dollars of budget cuts in social services, environmental protection, and other necessities. When public funds are so desperately needed, why should foundations use public money to forward their own private agendas and protect their own financial and political interests?

The Danger of the Megafoundation

The danger that this arrangement poses was seen in 2006, when the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, together with the Rockefeller Foundation, seeded \$150 million to launch the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) “to help revitalize agriculture on the continent.” Like India’s Green Revolution, AGRA assumes that critical injections of funding, research, training, and tools are necessary to reverse rural poverty across the African continent. In its May 2009 Agricultural Development Strategy paper posted on its website, the Gates Foundation says it aims to introduce 1,000 new varieties of seed, revitalize depleted soils, and expand African farmers’ access to markets. In addition to increasing African farmers’ use of green revolution technology (new seed varieties, irrigation, fertilizer, pesticides, and so on), AGRA also aims to strengthen women’s control over agriculture.

There are many problems with this initiative, which has been critically examined by several leading food and agriculture policy institutes, including the Oakland Institute and Food First. Drawbacks include a suite of social and environmental problems, much like those experienced during the first Green Revolution in Asia, including the widening gap between rich and poor farmers, degradation of agro-ecosystems, farmers’ exposure to environmental risk, and the loss of biodiversity, among many others. Another major critique of the Green Revolution is the dependence that farmers develop on genetically engineered seeds, which are patented by the corporations that sell them. Furthermore, as governments around the globe ban the importation of food containing genetically modified organisms, why would the Gates and Rockefeller foundations want to expose an entire continent to this ethically questionable form of agricultural practice?

In fact, increasing numbers of voices throughout Africa and beyond are challenging AGRA by pointing to its reliance on biotechnology and market demands, which they say will trap poor farmers in endless debt by forcing them to buy inputs, including genetically modified seeds. Many women’s groups in Africa are also critiquing AGRA’s limited gender analysis, arguing that it fails to substantively address women’s lack of

ownership of the modes of production, nor does it address women’s lack of power in decision making. This growing chorus argues that AGRA’s approach builds upon failed methodologies as opposed to learning from alternative points of view, which is fueling the various social movements organizing against AGRA.

This example embodies the problem of the Gates Foundation having more wealth than the GDP of dozens of African countries combined. Just because Gates Foundation trustees believe the solution to problems of low agricultural productivity rests in large part on technology doesn’t mean it’s the one shared by millions of peasant farmers whose lives and livelihoods will be affected most by the Green Revolution. At the 2007 World Social Forum in Nairobi, 70 African civil society organizations from 12 African countries issued a statement that “AGRA is putting over \$150 million towards shifting African agriculture to a system dependent on expensive, harmful chemicals, monocultures of hybrid seeds, and ultimately genetically modified organisms,” and that these initiatives “underrepresent the real achievements in productivity through traditional methods, and will fail to address the real causes of hunger in Africa.”

Even Michael Edwards, former director of the Governance and Civil Society division of the Ford Foundation, writes that philanthrocapitalism, a term coined by *The Economist* to describe the harnessing of business and the market to the goals of social change, is dangerous. He writes on justanotheremperor.org, “The increasing concentration of wealth and power among philanthrocapitalists is unhealthy for democracy. It’s time for more accountability.”

Democratizing Philanthropy

One argument in favor of social justice organizations pursuing foundation funds, or rather, quasi-public dollars, is that half that money—that would have gone into the tax coffers—is essentially theirs.

Moreover, nonprofits are increasingly expected to take on responsibilities traditionally held by government, such as providing health care to the poor and elderly and making sure there is job training, housing, and emergency food for the unemployed. However, foundations simply do not give out enough money to fund all these programs. Social justice organizations need foundation funding in order to advocate for policies that go to the root causes of social problems and that seek to end government off-loading of social services.

According to Karen Topakian, former head of the Agape Foundation in San Francisco, the more foundations give to social justice organizations to advocate for systemic change, the less we’ll need social service organizations in the long term:

“The more I fund organizations working for universal health care,” she says, “the less I will have to fund community health clinics.” Just as right-wing foundations funded \$1 billion for conservatives to develop their ideas of how to gain and maintain power in the past 30 years, \$1 billion toward social justice organizations could go a long way toward restoring democracy, equality, and genuine opportunity.

Not only must social justice organizations seek foundation funding, however, they must also seek fundamental change in the philanthropic arrangement in the U.S. As stewards of equity and democracy, social justice organizations have the

care and education systems and paying down our federal deficit. Foundations can, and should, be partners with social justice organizations in advocating for a government that raises and uses taxes in the way that they are intended—for the welfare of all people.

Even Warren Buffet is an avid opponent of more tax breaks for the ultra-rich. In response to a 2003 Senate tax cut on individual dividends, Buffet wrote in an op-ed published in the *Washington Post* on May 19, 2003, “When you listen to tax-cut rhetoric, remember that giving one class of taxpayer a ‘break’ requires—now or down the line—that an equivalent burden be imposed on

NOW IS THE TIME TO DEMOCRATIZE PHILANTHROPY AND PUSH FOR FUNDAMENTAL TAX REFORM TO ENSURE THAT MASSIVE WEALTH ISN'T ACCUMULATED IN THE FIRST PLACE.

responsibility to challenge a philanthropic system in which an exclusive, strictly chosen group of wealthy individuals controls hundreds of billions of dollars in tax-exempt assets. This is not an arrangement that benefits democracy. On the contrary, it is anti-democratic. We need to advocate for philanthropic reform that ensures that foundation boards are more representative of the American public. Foundations should be mandated to have community leaders, working-class men and women, and people of color—soon to be the majority population in the United States—to serve on their boards. Their participation in the decision-making process in allocating grants will help ensure that the public benefits more broadly from the grant pie.

Beyond Philanthropic Reform

In addition to the need for philanthropic reform, there also is the broader issue of the byzantine U.S. tax code that enables the extremely rich to accumulate their wealth. As fundraising expert Kim Klein said in her keynote address at the 2006 Raising Change: A Social Justice Fundraising Conference, “The money exists to solve almost every problem in the world, and it is not hard to figure out where it is. It is a question of creating policies to distribute it.”

Thanks to massive tax cuts to the wealthy legislated by the last Bush administration, our nation is facing the most regressive tax system in more than 50 years. In 2004, taxpayers with incomes of more than \$5 million paid, on average, only 21.9 percent of their incomes in federal tax; in 1952, by contrast, they paid 51.9 percent. According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, if the federal income tax rate on all incomes of more than \$10 million was raised to 70 percent and incomes of \$5 million to \$10 million were taxed at 50 percent, federal revenues in 2008 would increase by \$105 billion. This money would go a long way toward reforming our failing health

other parties. In other words, if I get a break, someone else pays. Government can't deliver a free lunch to the country as a whole. It can, however, determine who pays for lunch.”

And in his 2004 annual letter to shareholders of his Berkshire Hathaway Inc. holding company, Buffet wrote, “If class warfare is being waged in America, my class is clearly winning.”

It's heartening to hear strong voices among the wealthiest, including Buffet's, calling for greater taxes on the wealthy. One initiative from the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies proposes raising the top federal income tax rate on ultra-high incomes. A new group called Wealth for the Common Good went public in July 2009 by calling for an immediate reversal of the Bush-era tax cuts on households with incomes over \$235,000. Thousands signed the petition, including hundreds of high-income individuals who would personally pay the tax.

Foundations and Nonprofits: A More Equitable Future

It is common knowledge that the current model of philanthropy is not working, with the overwhelming bulk of foundation funds going to perpetuate institutions—such as mainstream arts groups, health care, educational institutions—that service the elite. But to simply look for alternatives to foundation funding is to miss a tremendous political opportunity to transform frustration into action. Now is the time to democratize philanthropy and push for fundamental tax reform to ensure that massive wealth isn't accumulated in the first place. This course of action requires democratizing philanthropy and a new courageous attitude from social justice nonprofits. ■

Christine Ahn is a fellow at the Korea Policy Institute in Los Angeles. She served for six years as a board member of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

Congrats, Stephanie! Thanks for all your fundraising tips and advice.

Cheers, Idaho Conservation League
www.idahoconservation.org

Stephanie—thanks for helping make this world a more just and equitable place.

With deep admiration, Jackie Kaplan

Stephanie...a true friend, leader and inspiration for us all. Your dedication to building and supporting movements for social justice and peace is unmatched!

—Ellen Gurzinsky

In Appreciation of GIFT's Contributions Towards Making a Better World For All—And In Recognition of Executive Director Priscilla Hung—THANK YOU!

—Joyce Ycasas

Thank you Stephanie Roth and GIFT for your many years of service strengthening social justice organizations working for change across the country.

—Peggy Mathews

I believe that every donation I make to GIFT helps build the movements for social change today, and in the future.

—Pam Rogers



Klein & Roth Consulting

*Roses are red,
violets are blue,
we are not very good
at creating Haiku.*

But we are very proud of you, Stephanie, and all you have accomplished at GIFT and the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*. Welcome back to full time consulting!

**With love and respect,
Kim Klein
Nancy Otto
Rona Fernandez**

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Congratulations to our Friend and Comrade, Stephanie!!

And kudos to Stephanie, Kim and Priscilla for their model generational leadership transition.

With admiration and well wishes from,
Helen, Robby, Frances and all of us at
Building Movement Project and SouthWest Organizing Project



The Building Movement Project works to strengthen the role of US nonprofit organizations as sites of democratic practice and to advance ways nonprofits can significantly contribute to building movement for progressive social change.

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Residents of Independence pose in front of their new public library.



Give 'em Ownership

A Small Town Raises Big Money

By Jacquie McTaggart

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN INDEPENDENCE, IOWA was not only the state's first free public library, it was also the state's smallest (per capita) library. Located in a small, rural, middle-class community, the library operated out of the same building for 117 years. Flooding on the lower level and bats in the upper story left only 2,300 sq. ft. of usable space — a grossly insufficient amount of space for 8,000 patrons.

For three decades Independence residents squabbled about what should be done. Some wanted to renovate the old building because it was on the National Register of Historic Places. Some wanted to build on a new site because there was no way to expand the old library's usable space. And some wanted to do nothing. A failed bond issue in 1984 punctuated the community's lack of cohesiveness.

Twenty years after the bond issue failed, and four discouraged librarians later, the Library Board (of which I am a member) decided to try a different approach. We compiled a multiple-choice questionnaire and distributed it widely to schools, churches, and civic organizations. We would use the responses to determine what, if any, library improvements

Independence residents wanted and chart the library's future course.

When the questionnaires were in (with a hearty 62 percent response rate) and the responses tabulated, the "build versus renovate" debate was over. An overwhelming majority wanted more space, more offerings, and more amenities than the existing site could accommodate. We needed a new facility. The Library Board decided to forego the bond issue route and try a \$3.1 million fundraising campaign. The old library, known locally as the Munson Building, would be put up for sale, and if the additional needed funds could be raised, a new facility would be built on a city-owned lot located near the business district.

We initiated the project with a "Give 'em Ownership" philosophy, and we concluded the donor solicitation phase with a "We Did It!" celebration. Our new, 14,200-sq.-ft. library officially opened on September 8, 2008. The facility is entirely paid for and there is a tidy excess (\$100,000) to be used as seed money for a newly established endowment fund.

This article details how we raised that much money in a

small community that had previously been divided over the need for library improvements.

Deciding on a Professional Fundraiser

The Independence Library Board, like most fundraising committees, wrestled with the professional fundraiser issue. We didn't want to use donor money to hire a professional, but we didn't have the time or expertise to "go it alone." After discussing the pros and cons of both methods and speaking with groups who had been through a fundraising campaign, we recognized that we would be more likely to be successful with professional guidance. We bit the money bullet and decided to hire a professional. We interviewed four capable applicants and

letin Journal gave front-page coverage to our library project.

For three months we were given a free "Library Update" column and colored photo in the upper right-hand corner of the front page. Some photos depicted different portions of the proposed library, some showed a patron responding to the question, "Why do you want a new library and what features do you want in it?" and some showed residents working at or enjoying a library event. Library director Laura Blaker selected and submitted each week's photo and wrote the accompanying text, including responses to questions and concerns from the rumor mill.

The free Library Update was only part of the *Bulletin Journal's* benevolence. It also published feature stories and photos

HIRING A PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISER IS OPTIONAL. CHOOSING A GOOD CHAIRPERSON IS MANDATORY.

ultimately awarded the job to Ralph Savoy of Consult Savoy, Inc. in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Ralph was experienced in writing grant proposals, and we liked his leadership plan: (1) Ask someone to do something; (2) Coach and encourage; (3) Recognize effort; (4) Celebrate achievement.

Choosing the "Best" Chairperson

Hiring a professional fundraiser is optional. Choosing a good chairperson is mandatory. Ralph suggested we look for someone in the community who was civic minded, well liked, and had frequent contact with different segments of the population. This list of qualifications sounded a bit ambitious, but it only took us ten minutes to formulate a list of potential candidates. Rob Robinson, president of one of our local banks, was our number one choice.

I had enjoyed a good relationship with Rob and his wife when two of their children were students in my first grade classroom, so naturally I was the one tapped to approach him. Yuck! I am outgoing by nature, but I do not like asking people for favors. But, with the board's encouragement and Ralph's assurance that he would accompany me on the visit, I decided to give it my best shot. Two days later Ralph and I left Rob's office with an enthusiastic "Yes" ringing in our ears. And I never flexed a muscle.

Courting the Media

It's impossible to determine one single practice as being the most important factor in our successful campaign, but the no-fee assistance of our local biweekly newspaper would definitely be a contender for first place. Throughout the campaign the *Bul-*

let throughout the building process and twice donated a full page for donor-name recognition. Your local newspaper will be your biggest ally — if you tell them your needs and publicly acknowledge their generosity.

Kicking Off the Campaign

The campaign kickoff sets the tone for the fundraising drive. If you plan to target a varied segment of your population (as we did), choose a venue that appeals to the masses and solicit help from all age and socioeconomic groups. Remember: involvement generates enthusiasm and enthusiasm ensures success.

We held our adult-only kickoff event, "Spellbound," at a local event center on a cold Sunday evening in January. The center seats 300 people and our \$20 admission tickets were sold out within a week. Space doesn't allow a full description of our campaign kickoff, but if you'd like details shoot me an email (address at end of article) and I'll be happy to tell you more. The following is a "bare bones" list of Spellbound activities.

- Posters of alphabetized sponsors' names (cost: \$300)
- Silent auction of new (donated) books signed by author
- Wine donated by a library supporter
- Local businessmen emcees
- Dinner with donated food
- Dinner music by a community band
- Dunce Cap - Recipients had to make a "voluntary" donation and share a humorous anecdote about another attendee before passing the Dunce Cap on
- Old-fashioned spelling bee featuring 30 four-member teams (\$50 per team entry fee)
- Live auction of quality art pieces

The Campaign Kickoff took six months to plan and involved nearly 100 volunteers, but the payoff far surpassed our most optimistic expectations. We generated enthusiasm, garnered community-wide support, and netted \$23,326.

Creating the Leadership Team

Sometimes fundraising committees overlook the potential value of the “little guys.” They tend to seek advice from the movers and shakers, ask the wealthy for money, and ignore those whom they think have little to offer. Doing so, they squander a golden opportunity.

Our fundraising committee was determined to involve people from all segments of the community, and the resolve paid big dividends. Thirty-five high-profile residents, identified at a board brainstorming session and subsequently recruited, made up the Capital Campaign Leadership Team. The Team identified potentially significant donors in the community (\$5,000-\$50,000) and, working in pairs, team members met with these prospects. Savoy and Robinson visited the “over \$50,000” prospects the Team had identified.

Donor privacy was stressed and strictly enforced throughout the campaign. Team members asked potential donors to send pledges (payable over a period of three years, if they wished) or checks to the library in a sealed envelope, without telling the solicitor the amount of the gift. Prior to the unveiling of the completed library’s Donor Wall, nobody other than Savoy, Robinson, Library Director Blaker, and Assistant Director Amy McGraw knew the amount of each donor’s gift.

A second-tier team of about 100 volunteers (identified and contacted by the Leadership Team) included blue-collar workers, the introverted, the elderly, and a few physically disabled residents. This group hosted neighborhood gatherings, solicited small money gifts, stuffed envelopes, made posters, and did countless other mundane but necessary tasks.

Kids did their part, too. Blaker met with different age groups to see what they wanted in the new library, and the kids concocted revenue-making schemes to help their cause. Little tykes, with assistance from teachers and adult volunteers, collected pennies; third through fifth graders put on a highly successful talent show, middle school students made and sold smoothies at community events, and high school musicians provided entertainment at library events. The kids’ enthusiasm bolstered spirits, and their monetary contributions helped fill the coffers.

Every person can contribute something to a campaign, and most are happy to help when they are sought out and asked. If you acknowledge each person’s effort and recognize his or her successes, he or she will be there the next time you need help.



A night shot of the Independence Public Library.

Seeking Grants

You may remember Kevin Costner’s famous line, “If you build it they will come,” in the 1989 movie, *Field of Dreams*. An experienced fundraiser might say, “If you construct it, there’s likely to be a grant.” Networking with organizations in your community and those who work on similar issues is probably the easiest way to find capital grants you may qualify for. If that fails, go to your favorite search engine. For example, I pulled up Google and entered “Iowa Grant Opportunities,” which returned 318,000 links. Oops. In an effort to refine my search I entered, “Iowa library grants” and was given only 244,000 links. Oops again. Network, network, network!

Caution: Writing a grant proposal is not for the inexperienced or the faint of heart. It is tough work, and chances are you will need advice and assistance from someone who has been there, done that. There are useful books on the subject, including *Grassroots Grants* by Andy Robinson. For us, Ralph was our grant angel. He researched, wrote, and submitted a total of eight proposals, and we received four grants, including Vision Iowa’s Community Attraction and Tourism Grant for \$550,000.

Asking by Mail

Many nonprofits do large-scale mailings of solicitation letters, using rented lists or ones that have been traded with other organizations. I do not recommend this strategy for a campaign such as this because you’re likely to spend more on postage than you bring in. You can expect only a 1 percent response when you mail to people who have not previously supported your organization. Direct mail works best when it is used to expand an already established donor base. Mailings sent to previous donors and established friends will undoubtedly net more than the typical 1 percent, but the amount of the gift will always be less than what you would get from a face-to-face ask.

On the other hand, a hand-addressed letter (computer labels

scream “junk mail”) to a well-chosen list can be productive, particularly if it is preceded by personal contact. Near the end of our campaign we sent one hand-addressed form letter to roughly 150 people who had indicated an interest in our project or had said they were going to contribute but had not yet done so. We had a 10 percent response to that mailing, including two \$500 gifts.

Wearing Our Message

You may not want to wear your heart on your sleeve, but you should consider promoting your project on your back. We went the T-shirt route and it paid off—big time. In response to a request, a local graphic artist submitted, at no charge, three designs for consideration. We chose the one with a picture of the old library (“Munson Building – Dedicated 1895”) and the architect’s drawing of the new facility (“Dedicated 2008”) encircled with the words, “A Proud Past – A Progressive Future” in a white oval that surrounded the two buildings.

Our initial order for 500 red, logo-emblazoned shirts sold out before the groundbreaking ceremony. A second order for 250 moved more slowly, but eventually sold. The T-shirts provided a visible sign of community support and netted a \$3,750 profit. Two years later, many people are still wearing their “Proud Past, Progressive Future” shirts at community-wide events.

Breaking Ground

The traditional groundbreaking picture usually has six or seven people (most of them men) wearing evening attire and hardhats, posing with gold-painted shovels and pretending to “break ground.” The Independence Library groundbreaking ceremony was anything but traditional. It was billed and promoted throughout the community (on the library website, newspaper, radio, church bulletins, school intercoms, and posters) as a Community Party. A “Decorate Your Shovel” contest for three age groups (little tykes, students, and adults) was used as attendance bait, with a prize promised to the winner of each group. The winner in the little tykes division could choose a book, the student winner could order—free of charge—a DVD, and the best adult shovel decorator was given a promissory note for a guided tour with up to four guests of the completed library before it was open to the public.

Groundbreaking day ended up being everything the planning committee had hoped for, and more. The sun shone brightly, our award-winning high school band provided lively music for the more than 200 arriving guests—38 of them bearing shovels—and TV cameramen jockeyed for position.

After judging the shovels, Christie Vilsack—the first lady of

Iowa and an avid library supporter—entertained the audience by sharing stories, some funny and some poignant, about her love for books and the many doors they had opened for her. After the speech everyone who had a shovel went to the center of the building site and those without shovels chanted “One, Two, Three—Dig!” The band played, cameras clicked, and a plane flew overhead trailing a huge “A Community Success” banner.

That sea of people, many wearing “A Proud Past–A Progressive Future” T-shirts, was involved, energized, and determined. They had a stake in the project. They had ownership.

Giving Recognition

It would be impossible to overestimate the value of giving recognition to all who help your cause—with time, money, or effort. We all like to feel needed, and we all appreciate an occasional pat on the back. Be generous with your kudos.

We recognized our “angels” often and in many ways, including these:

- Handwritten notes
- In the “Library Update” newspaper columns
- Verbally at Campaign Kickoff, Groundbreaking Ceremony, and Open House
- In periodic full-page newspaper ads listing contributors
- On the Donor Wall at the entrance of the new library (contributors giving \$500 or more)
- In a leather-bound book displayed next to the Donor Wall with names of all monetary contributors

Whether you use one or more of these methods or another great idea of your own, the important thing is that you recognize everyone at least once. More is better.

Celebrating

Our project took three years of planning, three months of fundraising, and fifteen months of building. Finally, we held an Open House at our beautiful, new, spacious library. The band played and the tears flowed. It had taken a very long time and a lot of hard work to get a new library in Independence, but it was worth it. Our residents united for a common cause, and our community is better because of it.

Will this plan work in any locale or with any fundraising endeavor? Yes, with variations molded to fit your community and your project. If you share your vision and have a common pursuit, your constituents will open their pockets and do the work. I promise. ■

Jacque McTaggart lives in Independence, Iowa. Contact Jacque at theteachersdesk.com or mctag@indytel.com.

Five Ways to Ride the Wave of the Media Buzz

By Nzinga Koné-Miller

ONE OF THE BEST TIMES to engage and mobilize your email list is when there's breaking news about your organization or your issue is garnering local and/or national attention. This is when you need to react—and react quickly—to ride the wave of the media-generated buzz.

The buzz generated by a high-profile issue or story can lend an urgency to your messaging that will encourage even some of your more nonresponsive list members to engage. When the topic is getting a lot of traffic in the media, you'll be in a good position to launch a campaign that will go "viral," and be passed on from your supporters to their friends and family—and that may attract new members to your list.

When South African runner Caster Semenya's eligibility for women's events was challenged recently, it was an opportunity for the National Sexuality Resource Center (NSRC) to respond. Although NSRC wasn't directly involved in any way or mentioned in the news, the topic of sex testing and the related assumptions about gender and sex made it an appropriate topic for them to mobilize around, in the process adding new members to their list and collecting online petition signatures supporting Caster.

To respond to breaking news, here are some things you can do:

1. Launch an email. Use the news to ask your supporters to take action, make a donation, or spread the word about the issue and/or your organization. If your organization is an advocate for immigrants' rights and there's an article about a controversial immigration reform proposal on the front page of the *New York Times*, determine what you'd like to ask your list to do—and then get a message out the same day or the following one. In other words, get your message out while the topic is hot—and before other organizations that focus on the same issue get theirs out.

The primary purpose of this message will depend on your organization's angle and strategy around the topic. If there is a pending legislative decision on an issue you're advocating on, the breaking news may be the perfect opportunity to ask your constituents to email or call their elected officials. If you have previously asked your list to contact their elected officials and the action is still relevant, then a follow-up communication might ask your list members who have not yet acted to do so while asking your previous action takers to tell their friends and family to join them in taking action on the issue. Or, you may opt to ask your previous action takers to make a donation to help fund your advocacy on the topic at hand.

It's worth noting that you're not limited to a single ask in a

sequence (a sequence is an email and the corresponding pages created to support the email—the page email recipients land on when they click links in the email, the confirmation page they land on after taking the action on the landing page, and so on). Do you most want your list members to email their city councilmember? If so, that should be the focus of the email and any corresponding landing page (particularly if you're using advocacy tools). However, after they've emailed the city councilmember, ask them to do whatever is second-most important on the confirmation page and in the confirmation email. Do you want as many people as possible to take the action? Redirect them to a Tell-a-Friend page after they take action. Do you want them to donate? Of course—but perhaps you first want their help rallying more people around the issue and building your email list. If so, direct them to a donation page—but only after they first submit the Tell-a-Friend page. Your sequence can always include multiple asks, but it's best to focus on a single request in each step of the sequence.

2. Support your email efforts on social networks. Make updates about your campaign or messaging on your fan page on Facebook. Spread the word on MySpace. Tweet it. Make sure you're asking your fans and followers to act in some way. These tools shouldn't only be a one-way communication highlighting how your organization feels about a particular issue; they should offer a way for people to interact.

Make sure your message is appropriate to the medium—more informal than email, and even funny, snarky, or inspirational if appropriate. Include the URL of a page where people can take the appropriate action. You can use your favorite service for abbreviating URLs (such as tinyurl or bit.ly) to create a short link to your action page in your status update or tweet.

3. Update your website. Do you have an independent Web presence that consistently gets traffic? If you have a Latest News or Updates sections of the home page or site, consider posting about the campaign there and linking directly to the page where site visitors can take action immediately. This kind of home page update is particularly important to your organization's longer-running and higher-profile campaigns (health care reform is an excellent example of this for many organizations)—but it's unnecessary and likely impractical for shorter, lower-priority campaigns.

4. Ask again. Sometimes a news-driven communication is a one-shot deal—but sometimes the issue will have a long life and you'll be able to ask your supporters to take additional actions on the issue. If you've already asked supporters to

send an email to their elected officials and the issue continues to heat up and get press, consider asking the action takers to make calls to their elected officials or to make a contribution to support your organization's efforts around the issue. You might also consider going back to the segment of your list that did not respond the first time around and asking them (again) to take action.

5. Report back. When there's a significant update on a key issue that you messaged about, send an update using email and social networks to let your supporters know that their actions made a difference (in the case of a win)—or how their actions could make a difference in the next steps of the campaign (in the case of a loss or other setback). This follow-up helps cultivate your organization's relationships with your supporters by

communicating about topics that they've demonstrated are most engaging to them.

Obviously, in order to do this you—or someone in your organization—will need to be tasked with being tuned into the media. This shouldn't take much of someone's time or energy, though, as they'll be looking for the big stories—the ones on MSNBC, in the *New York Times*, or even being mentioned by Jon Stewart. It's a little more time, but can be well worth the effort. Media buzz can give your messaging and campaigns the mileage and visibility they need to succeed. ■

Nzinga Koné-Miller is an account director at Watershed, a consulting and services firm designed expressly to help organizations build, grow, and sustain relationships with constituents online.

Fundraising Blogs: Five to Watch

By Manish Vaidya

AS FUNDRAISERS, we're often so busy trying to keep up with the next special event, major gift campaign, or end-of-year appeal that we don't make time to keep up with new fundraising trends and tips. Here's a way to carve out just a few minutes a day (or week) to learn more about what's going on in the field, and even to find new sources of inspiration for your work: read a fundraising blog.

At GIFT, we've been tracking fundraising and philanthropy blogs as they've proliferated in recent years, and many of them are terrible (if not downright painful) to read. Here are five that aren't.

You can subscribe to these free, short blogs via email. It takes about 10 minutes to read them all each day. Try it for a month. By the end of it, you'll have given yourself more than three hours' worth of free tips and tools. Not bad!

A note: We searched for good fundraising and philanthropy blogs written by fundraisers and activists of color working (either paid or unpaid) with social justice organizations in the United States. We were looking for something that had a progressive political analysis plus solid, practical, easy-to-use fundraising tips. We couldn't find a single one. Look for a GIFT blog to start sometime in 2010, featuring a multi-racial team of fabulous fundraisers.

Know of any great blogs on fundraising and philanthropy? We'd love to hear about them: email manish@grassrootsfundraising.org.

BETH'S BLOG

Beth Kanter probably knows everything there is to know about fundraising using Facebook, Twitter, and all things social media.

http://beth.typepad.com/beths_blog/

ENOUGH

Dean Spade and Tyrone Boucher write some of the sharpest analysis of money, fundraising, power and wealth redistribution that I've seen in a blog. They do it by sharing their first-person accounts, which keeps it interesting.

<http://www.enoughenough.org/>

GETTING ATTENTION

Like lists and step-by-step plans and case studies? Nancy Schwartz does. Check them out:

<http://www.gettingattention.org/>

KATYA'S NON-PROFIT MARKETING BLOG

Katya Andresen's blog expands on her book *Robin Hood Marketing: Stealing Corporate Savvy to Sell Just Causes*. The blog and the book are worth reading religiously (or spiritually, or secularly).

<http://www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com/>

KIVI'S NONPROFIT COMMUNICATIONS BLOG

If I only have time to read one how-to blog in a day, I read Kivi's. A recent post gave tips on how to become a better storyteller. Read the post, then gather your donors around a campfire and tell them a story about your group's work that they'll be sure to tell others.

<http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com/blog/>

Manish Vaidya is program and development coordinator of GIFT.



Reflections on at the Grassroots Fundraising Journal

By Stephanie Roth

AS I PREPARE TO STEP DOWN from my role as editor-in-chief of the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*, I want to share some reflections on my 20 years of working with the *Journal* and offer some thoughts for fundraising and social justice going forward.

My first “job” for the *Journal* was a part-time position, which if I’d had a title would have been called circulation director. I helped maintain the *Journal’s* mailing list by typing new

an issue out every two months. That stress became especially acute when we were down to the wire and suddenly short an article (or two!) and had to scramble to fill the gap. In the early days, this often meant *Journal* founder Kim Klein writing on a plane ride home from a training or working all weekend to write something new. It also meant that our wonderful copyeditor, Nancy Adess (who has been copyeditor of the *Journal* since

IT’S THE REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES WRITTEN BY REAL PEOPLE THAT MAKE WHAT WE PUBLISH RESONATE SO STRONGLY WITH OUR READERS.

subscribers onto sheets of paper that were then photocopied onto mailing labels that were then stuck on *Journal* copies for mailing. The job also entailed whiting out lapsed subscribers, or whiting out and typing in new address info for subscribers who had moved. Given this labor-intensive process, you can understand why I helped the *Journal* acquire a computer-based database. This first database was a very basic, “non-relational” piece of software, but it allowed us to change addresses, sort the list in zip code order, and so on, which gave me the chance to go on to more challenging tasks.

What really appealed to me about the *Journal*—then and now—was how concrete it was. I loved the fact that every two months there was this product that was full of extremely practical information but that was infused and informed by social justice values and examples. Nowhere else could people involved in the women’s movement, in anti-war and anti-racist organizing, in the environmental justice and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) movements read about fundraising that used examples from organizations like theirs and that spoke to their realities, challenges, and politics. To this day, the *Journal* stands out in this way from the information about fundraising that is widely available in publications, on the Internet, and in training and consulting programs throughout the country.

I have many fond memories from my eventual role as editor of the *Journal*, as well as recollections about the stress of getting

the very beginning!), more often than not had to be completely flexible with our shifting deadlines. Truthfully, the *Journal* would not have survived all these years without Nancy. Her editing skills are remarkable, but more important for me, as a fundraiser herself, Nancy understands the content of the *Journal* so well that she often served as a one-woman editorial board for both Kim and me.

Sources of Inspiration

What stands out the most in my career as fundraising consultant and *Journal* editor is the incredible variety of people I met through my travels, my training and consulting work, and through the stories people sent to the *Journal* letting us know what was working and what wasn’t in their efforts to raise money in their communities. It’s the real-life examples written by real people that make what we publish resonate so strongly with our readers. After 29 years, there are now new generations of readers and people writing about things they learned about in the *Journal* that they’re applying to their organizations, but with changes to make them work in their communities and cultures.

Here are some of the articles we published that made me particularly proud to be part of the *Journal* (along with the issue in which they appeared, if you’d like to order them from our website):

20 Years

- “Getting it Right from the Start,” by Dean Spade, about his experiences as the founding director of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP), a New York organization that works with low-income transgender people. Dean wrote about his growing recognition that engaging the members of SRLP, as well as the broader LGBT community, in fundraising would further both the organization’s mission and its financial goals much more effectively than focusing primarily on foundation grants (Vol 24, #1).
- “Inspiring Stories in Challenging Times: A Fabulous, Fun & Financially Successful Gala Dinner,” by Elmer Roldan. This article described the Community Coalition in South Central Los Angeles that works with low-income black and Latino residents and that nets \$400,000 a year from their annual gala by building on solid fundraising practices. Their success speaks to the power of community engagement and of not assuming that a low-income community can’t have a big—and financially successful—fundraising event (Vol 28, #4).
- “Who’s Doing What on the Internet,” by Nick Allen, which we published in 1996, long before it was commonplace for organizations to even have a website, much less use it for fundraising (Vol 15, #6).
- “The Donor in Us All,” by Chris Malcomb, who told the story of a young man serving a life sentence in prison who donates half of his earnings from his prison job as a sewing machine repairman—\$36/month—to a food program for poor people in Haiti. That article challenged many assumptions about who gives and underscored the power of giving (Vol 27, #1).
- I also love the creative approaches to fundraising revealed in several articles, such as the “clean-a-thon” that a group in Minnesota does every year to raise money and provide a great service to the senior clients of a meals on wheels program (Vol 24, #3); a take-off on the TV show, *Amazing Race*, that Queers for Economic Justice runs every year as a fundraising pledge event (Vol



GFJ staff in 1996 display some early publications. Seated: Kim Klein (left) and Stephanie Roth; standing: Nancy Adess (left) and Rosi Reyes.

26, #6); and “Fundraising Tuesday,” an article about an environmental organization in Idaho that decided that all its staff people would dedicate Tuesdays to fundraising, providing a way to make fundraising a team effort. Surprisingly, staff began to look forward to Tuesdays and had much greater fundraising success (Vol 22, #4).

- “The Seasonal Board,” by Jill Violet, about experimenting with a new structure for the board of her organization that showed how people are creating new ways of building groups and teams, and not giving up on the value of volunteer leadership (Vol 23, #6).

And of course, all of Kim Klein’s amazing writing—her wisdom, inspiration, humor, and “just do it” attitude has both infused the *Journal* for the past 29 years and inspired many of our other contributors. Here are a few of my favorites among Kim’s many articles:

- “The Perennial Question of Clean & Dirty Money” (Vol 19, #2)
- “The Fine Art of Asking for the Gift” (Vol 25, #1)
- “The Board and Fundraising” (The Board of Directors, Special Edition)
- “You Already Know all the People You Need to Know to Raise All the Money You Need to Raise” (Vol 16, #2)

- “The Ten Most Important Things You Can Know About Fundraising” (Vol 25, #1)
- “Clean Up Your Language” (Vol 12, #6)
- “Donors Are Not Water Faucets” (Vol 15, #6)
- “Outing Overhead” (Vol 22, #6)

All of these stories are part of what makes the *Journal* continue to be important not just to social justice organizations, but to the broader nonprofit sector, and they are what continue to inspire fundraisers, activists, and even those questioning the nonprofit industrial complex!

Debunking a Few Myths

Even 29 years later, there are some persistent myths about grassroots fundraising that continue to resurface and that I’d like to address here.

First, as helpful and valued as the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal* is, I still hear people say that grassroots fundraising is all well and good for getting small contributions and for encouraging board members and others to make a good-faith effort to



Vicki Quatmann, Stephanie Roth, Guadalupe Guajardo, June Rostan, and Yvette Brandon at a GIFT planning meeting in Tennessee circa 1997.

support an entire extended family, or the \$35-a-year donor who left a \$500,000 bequest to her alma mater.

Thinking that only wealthy people are major donors leads organizations to overlook the many people they already know who would support their work with much larger gifts if they were approached, engaged, appreciated, and asked to do so.

GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING IS NOT JUST ABOUT RAISING SMALL AMOUNTS OF MONEY. IT’S ABOUT RAISING MONEY FROM ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE, RICH AND POOR AND EVERYONE IN BETWEEN.

participate in fundraising, but that it doesn’t really amount to very much money, and besides, it’s way too much work.

In fact, grassroots fundraising is not just about raising small amounts of money. It’s about raising money from all kinds of people, rich and poor and everyone in between. It means you have to reach out and talk to lots of different kinds of people about your work and even include them in that work. It means far more people knowing about what you do and pushing out your agenda. It means not overlooking the people you come into contact with every day but instead inviting them to make a difference by giving you some money, among other ways of getting involved.

Obama’s presidential campaign should have put to rest once and for all the idea that grassroots fundraising is only about little bits of money. He raised a historic amount of money—about half a billion dollars—from several million individual donors, many of them giving small gifts, and that was a big part of what got him elected.

A second fundraising myth is that major gifts come only from rich people. Anyone who’s spent any time raising money from individual donors can tell you about the school teacher on a modest salary who gives a major gift of \$1,000 a year, or the immigrant worker who sends enough money back to his family in the Phil-

Third, there is an idea in social justice organizations that some people are “donors” and other people are “members” or “activists.” The donors give money and the members and activists do the work. In fact, anyone can (and is) a donor, and many wealthy donors are also deeply engaged in the work of organizations. It’s time to stop thinking in these kinds of categories that wind up replicating class divisions in our organizations that we’re working to eliminate in the larger society.

Farewell but Not Goodbye

For 28 years, the *Journal* has helped people raise the money to make the changes in their communities and the world that must be made. I’m stepping down (from a paid position, in any case, with many volunteer opportunities ahead!), proud of being part of this work, proud of GIFT and the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal* coming together into one organization, and inspired by the creativity, passion, and dedication that the next generation of staff, board, writers, and trainers is bringing to the organization. I look forward to being a *Journal* subscriber and a GIFT donor for many years to come. ■

Stephanie Roth is the outgoing editor of the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*. Reach her now at stephanie@kleinandroth.com.

Stephanie:

Congratulations on all the fine work you have done with GIFT and the Grassroots Fundraising Journal over the years! You are an extraordinary person, which is not surprising since you are related to us!

Fran and Irwin Roth
Alison Roth
Dan Roth and Karin Ashley
Andy Roth
Lisa Roth



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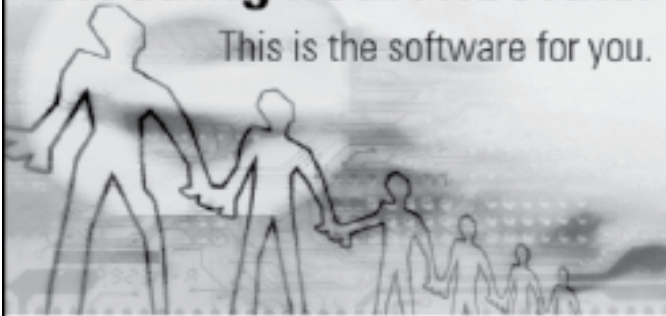
From the Uncoin'n Campaign, a project of the Center for Community Change



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Congratulations, Stephanie. May the Universe return to you ten-fold the many gifts you've given to your clients, your colleagues, your community. It's a privilege to be counted among them.

Liz Callahan, executive director

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GIFT is a vital part of the Social Justice Movement's infrastructure. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude. Our histories and future are bound together.

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CAVP sends out gratitude and love to Jordan, Nia, Jerrilyn, Veronica, Tanya, Jenn, and all the generations of our GIFT family!

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Dearest Stephanie and Priscilla,

Congratulations and thanks to you and GIFT for all you do for social justice!

I hope to help you overcome your tooth aches for many more years to come :)

— Samuel Gonzalez, Intrepid Consulting

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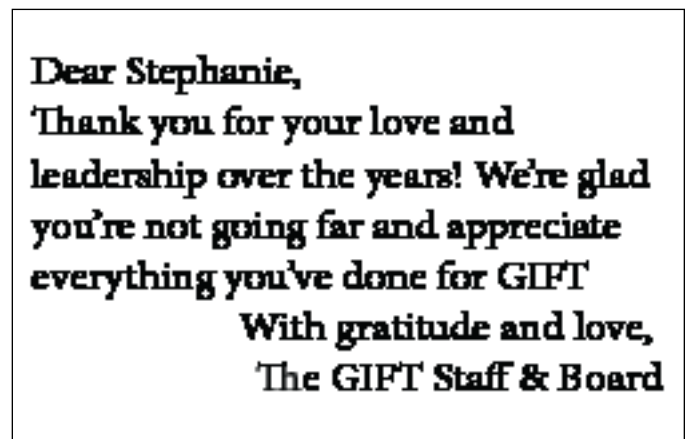
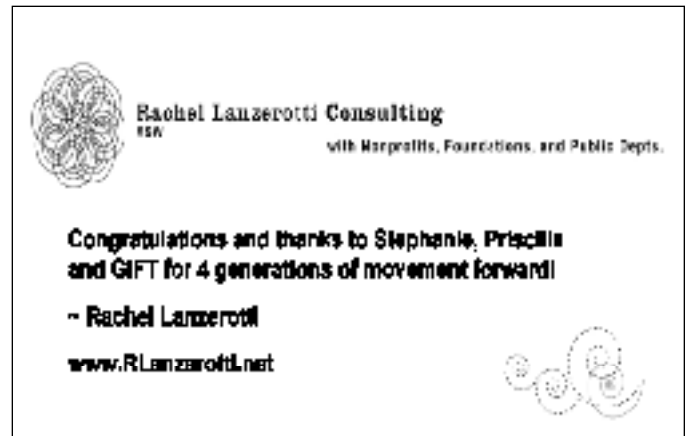
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Blessings to Stephanie, and all our thanks!

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We are grateful for your outstanding work combining fundraising with social justice activism. CAE has grown tremendously because of you.

—Annie Ellman and The Center for Anti-violence Education

Congratulations GIFT! In gratitude for your many years of commitment to social justice and communities of color.

—The Women's Building

To Jenn Samimi because she's cool at what she does.

—Christopher Connor

Congratulations, Stephanie, for good work well done and for nurturing the next generation of social and economic justice fundraisers.

—Judy AusterMiller

Congratulations to Stephanie on her years of great work with GIFT and *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*.

—With love, June Makela

Stephanie, you've been a fine editor of the *Journal* all these years, despite, like editors everywhere, having to deal with all those pesky writers (to say nothing of the senior copy editor). I'll miss working with you.

—Nancy A.

Thank you, Stephanie!
From *Strategies for Social Change*
Elsa A. Rios & Carmen V. Rivera



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affection.

-Jan Masaoka,
Blue Avocado



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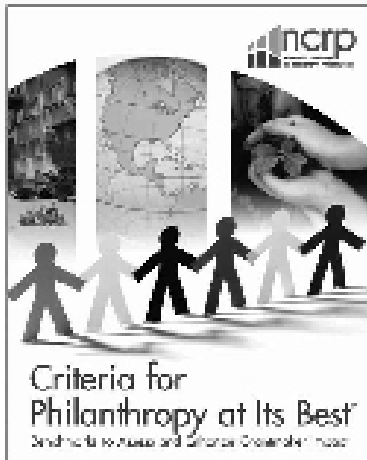
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Congratulations to Stephanie and Priscilla from Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice! Thanks GIFT for being such a wonderful resource to the movement!

Congrats my dear Cil
for following your ideals
With love, your sis, Chis

–Christine Hung

Thanks for your powerful leadership and patient wisdom. Keep up The Work even after changing The Job!

Love, Dave Beckwith

With great appreciation Stephanie, for your many contributions toward building the movement's fundraising capacity - an invaluable benefit for all.

–Fred Goff

Stephanie, friend and colleague, a powerful force in my life and in the march towards social justice.

Much love, Acey

The New York Foundation celebrates Stephanie and GIFT for its dedication to our grantees and to the craft of grassroots fundraising.

Big Ups to Stephanie for her determination, love & leadership in forging the GIFT program.

–Gary Delgado & Marcia Henry

* *Dear Stephanie -* *

Thank you so much for the mentoring leadership, and vision you have given so many of us through the years... may your next chapter be all you wish it to be! ... and, please do not go too far away...

Love, Laurie

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The Nonprofit Quarterly congratulates Stephanie Roth for 15 years of great publishing at the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*. Under her leadership, *GFJ* has continued to provide us with that remarkable combination of grounded progressive politics and practical fundraising advice that has so distinguished it over the years.

With much gratitude to our wonderful colleague,
The Nonprofit Quarterly Staff and Board

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Congratulations, Stephanie! Much appreciation for your work and the spirit in which you do it. Best wishes for the next steps of your journey.

—Pam McMichael

Stephanie: Thanks for playing a central role in creating GIFT! It's an invaluable tool for advancing social justice! Congratulations!

— Victor Quintana

Challenges abound
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—Thanks for a lifetime of passion for social justice, Cheri Bryant

To know you, Stephanie, is to love you...may you be filled with self appreciation...mazel tov!

—Shelly Wald

Steve Lew, You are the best! Thanks for being the resourceful person you are for so many people.

—Adrian Tyler

Deep appreciation to Stephanie and generations of GIFT leaders. The movement relies on your wisdom, resources, generosity. Welcome Priscilla!

—Emily G.

With gratitude and admiration for Stephanie's editorial leadership of the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*.

—Jeanne Bell/CompassPoint



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